

# THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE WEEKLY UPDATE

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## President Obama in Boston: "Every one of us stands with you"

On Thursday, President Obama spoke at Healing Our City – an interfaith service held at Boston's Cathedral of the Holy Cross dedicated to the victims of Monday's bombing.



The President began his remarks by delivering to the people of Boston what he said was a simple message on behalf of all Americans: "Every one of us has been touched by this attack on your beloved city. Every one of us stands with you."

President Obama paid tribute to the three young souls who lost their lives in the tragic bomb blasts near the finish line of the Boston Marathon.

Of Krystle Cambell, 29, the President said, "she was always smiling" and "those who knew her said that with her red hair and her freckles and her ever-eager willingness to speak her mind, she was beautiful, sometimes she could be a little noisy, and everybody loved her for it." He said of the loss of Lingzi Lu, 23, that "in the heartache of her family and friends on both sides of a great ocean, we're reminded of the humanity that we all share."

The President offered his prayers for Martin Richard. The President said "our hearts are broken for 8-year-old Martin -- with his big smile and bright eyes. His last hours were as perfect as an 8-year-old boy could hope for -- with his family, eating ice cream at a sporting event. And we're left with two enduring images of this little boy -- forever smiling for his beloved Bruins, and forever expressing a wish he made on a blue poster board: 'No more hurting people. Peace.'

President Obama praised the people of Boston – a city he noted both he and Mrs. Obama once called home—and the brave first responders, runners, and spectators who ran toward the explosions to help the wounded.

The President said:

"You've shown us, Boston, that in the face of evil, Americans will lift up what's good. In the face of cruelty, we will choose compassion. In the face of those who would visit death upon innocents, we will choose to save and to comfort and to heal. We'll choose friendship. We'll choose love.

"Scripture teaches us, 'God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.' And that's the spirit you've displayed in recent days.

"When doctors and nurses, police and firefighters and EMTs and Guardsmen run towards explosions to treat the wounded -- that's discipline.

"When exhausted runners, including our troops and veterans -- who never expected to see such carnage on the streets back home -- become first responders themselves, tending to the injured -- that's real power.

"When Bostonians carry victims in their arms, deliver water and blankets, line up to give blood, open their homes to total strangers, give them rides back to reunite with their families -- that's love.

"That's the message we send to those who carried this out and anyone who would do harm to our people. Yes, we will find you. And, yes, you will face justice. We will find you. We will hold you accountable. But more than that; our fidelity to our way of life -- to our free and open society -- will only grow stronger. For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but one of power and love and self-discipline."

Following the Healing our City service, President Obama visited with patients, their families, and staff at Massachusetts General Hospital. The First Lady visited with those recovering and working at Boston Children's Hospital and Brigham and Women's Hospital. President and Mrs. Obama also thanked first responders and volunteers at Boston Cathedral High School.

Click [here](#) to watch President Obama's remarks in Boston.

### **[President Obama on Senate Vote to Block Expanded Background Checks for Gun Sales](#)**

On Wednesday, President Obama delivered remarks following a vote in the U.S. Senate blocking bipartisan legislation to expand background checks for gun sales. The President was joined by former Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, several of the families of the Sandy Hook Elementary victims, and other Americans whose lives have been forever altered by gun violence.

The President said:

"A few months ago, in response to too many tragedies -- including the shootings of a United States Congresswoman, Gabby Giffords, who's here today, and the murder of 20 innocent schoolchildren and their teachers -- this country took up the cause of protecting more of our people from gun violence.

"Families that know unspeakable grief summoned the courage to petition their elected leaders -- not just to honor the memory of their children, but to protect the lives of all our children. And a few minutes ago, a minority in the United States Senate decided it wasn't worth it. They blocked common-sense gun reforms even while these families looked on from the Senate gallery."



President Obama said that while the Senate's blocking of the legislation was shameful, there is still hope to get something done. He reaffirmed his commitment to enacting commonsense reforms, saying that after witnessing far too many tragedies related to gun violence in recent years, we cannot stand idly by. The President said that the only way to achieve progress now is if the American people demand it.

The President said:

"So to change Washington, you, the American people, are going to have to sustain some passion about this. And when necessary, you've got to send the right people to Washington. And that requires strength, and it requires persistence.

"And that's the one thing that these families should have inspired in all of us. I still don't know how they have been able to muster up the strength to do what they've doing over the last several weeks, last several months. And I see this as just round one. When Newtown happened, I met with these families and I spoke to the community, and I said, something must be different right now. We're going to have to change. That's what the whole country said. Everybody talked about how we were going to change something to make sure this didn't happen again, just like everybody talked about how we needed to do something after Aurora. Everybody talked about we needed change something after Tucson.

"And I'm assuming that the emotions that we've all felt since Newtown, the emotions that we've all felt since Tucson and Aurora and Chicago -- the pain we share with these families and families all across the country who've lost a loved one to gun violence -- I'm assuming that's not a temporary thing. I'm assuming our expressions of grief and our commitment to do something different to prevent these things from happening are not empty words.

"I believe we're going to be able to get this done. Sooner or later, we are going to get this right. The memories of these children demand it. And so do the American people."

### **President Obama Welcomes Wounded Warriors Taking Part in the "Soldier Ride"**

On Wednesday, President Obama welcomed participants of the Wounded Warrior Project's Soldier Ride, a three-day bike ride that unites combat-wounded warriors and encourages healing from the wounds of war through cycling and camaraderie.

The President said:

"Together, with your outstanding families, you represent what's best in America. When we needed patriots to defend our freedom, you have answered the call. You've risked everything for our country and for each other. And you've made sacrifices most of us can barely imagine.

"So thanks to your courage and your resolve, we've been able to end one war; we're beginning to wind down another. But for you, as is true for all of our wounded warriors, coming home doesn't mean that the fight is over. In some ways, it's just begun."



President Obama highlighted specific individuals who participated in the ride, including Staff Sergeant Erick Millette who survived 17 IED attacks during two tours in Iraq.

The President said:

"They left him with the kinds of injuries that you can't always see: head trauma, brain injury, PTSD. Erick's military career was cut short, but he's taken on a new mission, and that's sharing his story with audiences across the country.

"So he spread the message that it's okay to talk about these unseen wounds of war. It's okay to seek out help and to seek out support. Erick says that the Wounded Warrior Project literally saved his life, and now through his work, he's helping save even more lives. So, Erick, thank you so much. And obviously, to Sean and everybody who is participating, we could not be prouder of you."

Read President Obama's full remarks [here](#).

## Issues in the News

### **Talking Points: Reducing Gun Violence**

- After the shooting of United States Congresswoman Gabby Giffords, the murder of 20 innocent schoolchildren and their teachers, and far too many other tragedies, our country took up the cause of reducing gun violence.
- In the intervening months, President Obama said that he's had no worse day on the job than December 14. It was clear that we needed to act. It was the right thing to do, and while we knew it was going to be hard, the President believed that we needed to do it anyway.
- And moving quickly was paramount.
  - The President called on Congress to quickly pass a ban on assault weapons, high-capacity magazines, and to close loopholes in the background check system just days after Newtown.
  - Less than a month later President Obama acted administratively and announced 23 executive orders to reduce gun violence.
  - And the administration never backed off the tough issues. Not acting on these issues wasn't an option for President Obama.
- The administration was not deterred by the politics, because it knew that the American people were firmly behind taking action on these issues.
- Some suggested that whether action on these issues succeeded or failed would be a political victory or defeat. But these issues are not about the President or politics. This was about doing the right thing for the families ripped apart by gun violence, and families going forward. The President made sure these issues weren't relegated to the back burner.
- 90% of Americans believe we should make it harder for dangerous people to buy a gun with universal background checks. 90% of Democrats in the Senate support that idea. But since 90% of Republicans voted against that idea, it's not going to happen.
- A majority of Senators supported smarter background checks. But a minority was able to block it from moving forward by twisting the Senate's rules.
- Senators Joe Manchin and Pat Toomey forged a bipartisan compromise on background checks. The President applauded their effort, which only extended the same background checks currently in place for guns purchased by a dealer to guns bought at a gun show or over the internet. The bill respected the rights of gun owners and the victims of gun violence.

- To sum it up, this was a shameful day for Washington. But the administration is going to do everything possible to reduce the impact of gun violence.
  - To keep more guns out of the hands of dangerous individuals, President Obama is determined to address the barriers that prevent states from participating in the existing background check system.
  - The administration is going to give law enforcement more information about lost and stolen guns so they can do their job.
  - And the administration is going to do all it can to put model emergency plans in place without legislation to protect children in our schools.
- But if Congress refuses to act to reduce gun violence, the real impact is going to come from the voters. The supporters of these common sense gun violence reforms must let their Congressional representatives know that they are disappointed, and that they'll be held accountable on Election Day if they don't act.
- This is just Round One. Because the emotions we've all felt since Newtown, Aurora, Tucson and Chicago are not temporary. The pain shared with families across America who lost a loved one due to gun violence was not temporary. We are going to get this right eventually because the memories of the lives lost demand it.